

**Eagle Nest Elementary School**

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Dorchester School District 2

**SC-SIC Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award 2013**  
**Eagle Nest Elementary School Case Statement**

Visualize the Publishers Clearing House commercial with people knocking on your door and you answering with all the excitement you can muster. Now, imagine that same feeling, but for children receiving books at their homes from teachers, administration, other school staff, and SIC committee members. Every year, we load up in a caravan of cars and deliver about twenty books to many students in our school. We jump out, knock on the door, and take such joy in celebrating reading with our students, capturing the moment with banners and pictures. Reading Prize Patrol is the most rewarding event we have at Eagle Nest Elementary all year!

Eagle Nest Elementary is located in North Charleston, South Carolina on the outskirts of Dorchester County. Eagle Nest is surrounded by military installations, large companies like Boeing and Bosch, local hospitals, and other small businesses. We opened in 2007, after having construction halted due to a Bald Eagle nest on the school grounds. Once the nest was free of eaglets, Eagle Nest Elementary was born. Now in our sixth year, we have grown to 859 students, ranging from 4K to fifth grade, including two autistic classes and three Gifted and Talented classes.

The 859 students are made up of 58.6% free and reduced lunch population, therefore qualifying EES as a Title One School. The "Nest" is made up of 17.9% Hispanic, 36.2% Caucasian, 41% African American, and 4.9 Asian/Indian. We embrace our diverse population and school culture with the support of an on-site translator, 1.5 ESOL teachers, and other staff members who are fluent in both English and Spanish. Our "melting pot" population, along with our high free and reduced lunch students, and lack of resources creates a need for us to provide our parents with the tools necessary to be more active participants in their child's education.

**Issue:**

The issue that we have in our school is our surrounding suburban community is made up of a large low socio economic status population and an extremely high transient area due to military, Hispanic, and poverty stricken families that are often in and out of school on a constant basis. These families find it hard to provide their children with the materials and/or resources needed for their children to be successful in school. With us being a Title One school, federal regulations require that a percentage of Title One funds be used to increase parental involvement. Our SIC decided we needed to use that and do more!

**Actions Taken:**

Eagle Nest Elementary School Improvement Council, in conjunction with our Title One Committee and school Guidance Counselors, sent out a parent survey to find out the needs and interests of the families in our attendance area. The survey showed that parents were interested in receiving ideas of how to help their children with homework and learning various strategies to increase reading skills. Many families also shared they did not have an abundance of literature in their homes to support reading like they needed to. The School Improvement Council then decided that the Reading Prize Patrol would be a great way to help get families involved with reading at home and building on the skills their children needed.

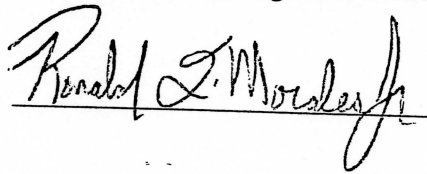
The SIC Committee developed a permission slip for students to turn in, in order to be a winner. It required students to be at home within certain time restraints reading. If they were chosen, when we arrived at their home, and they were reading, they would be winners and receive books. The idea has continued to grow larger and larger. Last year, we chose 20 students throughout the year and each of them received a total of about 20 books per household. Teachers, administration, staff members, and SIC Committee members went to each of our neighborhoods delivering books to families that turned in the permission slip. It is such a rewarding moment to deliver those books to our families and to see other students in the neighborhoods when we are out! The other students are just as excited as the winners at just seeing us in their neighborhoods. I think that is what keeps the excitement going from year to year!

The bags of books are selected according to the ages of the winners and the needs of the families. The Hispanic families receive books in English and Spanish. Homes with more than one child receive books of various levels and genres to accommodate all the children in the house. We try very hard to always choose a varied group of children for each of the neighborhoods in our area for each patrol. The next day, any children that were not chosen, still receive a book as a thank you for participating! We want everyone to be a winner!

**Results:**

The response from the families visited by the Reading Prize Patrol has been wonderful. Pictures are taken of the students during the visits and posted on the Eagle Nest website. We also receive thank you cards from families and children explaining what this night means to them. So far, we have awarded over 80 students homes on the Reading Prize Patrol!

SIC Committee Chairperson:

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# *Eagle Nest Elementary School*

*8640 River Oaks Drive*

*North Charleston, South Carolina 29420*

*843-695-2460 Fax 843-695-2465*

November 12, 2012

To the Riley Award Committee,

Imagine, you are a parent and there is a knock on your door. When you open the door, you see a banner and hear "Reading Prize Patrol" shouted by the principal, assistant principal, teachers and SIC members from your child's school. They are carrying a bag of books for your children. The faces of the children and parents is so rewarding that it is worth the 2 hours in the evening we spend giving books to families. As we travel through neighborhoods by van, school bus or caravan of cars, the children wave, shout and sometimes even gather around us because they are so excited to see us in their neighborhood. We take pictures with everyone and display them in the school. This is a time in the child's life, and the parents, that they never forget.

Eagle Nest Elementary, along with the School Improvement Council thinks that there is no better way to use funds than to put children's literature in the hands of families for home use. Many of our families do not have transportation to the local libraries and have no other resources to obtain books. The Reading Prize Patrol fills bags with books and information on reading strategies for parents to use to help their children of all ages. We visit all neighborhoods sharing books with at least 12 different families twice each year. I am extremely proud of this program and am honored to share it with the Riley Award Committee. I hope you are as touched by the work of the Reading Prize Patrol as the families are at Eagle Nest Elementary.

Sincerely,



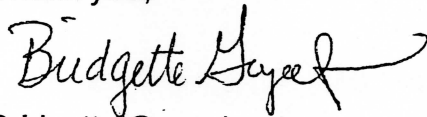
Karen Spillane  
Principal  
Eagle Nest Elementary

November 12, 2012

Dear Riley Award Committee,

Last year the Reading Prize Patrol visited my son. Words cannot describe the look on my son's face when he saw the large group of teachers, staff, administrators, and committee members at our front door! He was so surprised and excited. This visit was very inspiring for our whole family. After receiving the books, he could not wait to get started reading. The prize bag contained about fifteen books and we read all evening. My son did not want to go to bed until each and every book had been read! I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the Eagle Nest Elementary School Improvement Council for their work with this program and for helping to inspire my son's love for reading.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bridgette Gonzalez". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Bridgette Gonzalez

November 10, 2012

I am writing this letter to thank the Eagle Nest Elementary School and the School Improvement Committee for the support they have given me and my children. We loved the surprise home visit and the free books they brought with them.

We know that the books are a great tool and they have helped them with reading. Reading is essential for my children to advance their education and better their future. I am very grateful to all the people who were involved in such a great thing.

Sincerely,

The Cantero -Martinez family



**SC-SIC Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award 2013**  
**Eagle Nest Elementary SIC's progress on goals established during the previous school year**

The Reading Prize Patrol is a program that we instituted that has grown to be quite a gem at our school. The SIC committee has really gotten involved in this celebration of our families. When you think of our continually changing diverse population, this program has given us the opportunity to bring literature to those who can benefit from it most. So far, we have been able to serve twenty students from Kindergarten to fifth grade every year through the Reading Prize Patrol. Teachers, administration, staff and committee members go through our surrounding neighborhoods to deliver about twenty books to each family. This is a venture that we will continue from year to year. This year we have been contacted by one of the local high schools, Ashley Ridge High School, that is currently having a book drive with a Book Club at the school to donate books for us to use for our spring prize patrol. We also plan to conduct a Math Prize Patrol where we will bring math games and books to about seven or eight families from our school. Because this program has been such a success, we will continue to find ways to make it grow larger from year to year!

The SIC at Eagle Nest Elementary School (EES) also recognized the importance of pedestrian safety, and made it one of its top goals during the 2011-2012 school year. Because EES sits on the periphery of a rapidly growing subdivision called "Taylor Plantation", there has been a steady increase in the student and parent pedestrian traffic over the past few years. Given this fact, the SIC quickly acted to find relatively inexpensive, yet highly effective solutions to help ensure pedestrian safety. First, cross walks were painted at the three-way intersection which enters the school from Taylor Plantation, as well as at the parking lot entrance and exit. Next, signs were posted in the parking lot to more efficiently direct traffic in one direction, which would help avoid vehicle collisions and backups. In addition to the signs, small barriers were placed at the entrance and exit of the parking lot to help ensure the traffic flowed in one direction. Finally, an additional stop sign and police officer were added to the intersection from Taylor Plantation into the school, which transformed the intersection into a much safer three-way stop for pedestrian crossing and vehicle traffic. Getting this one stop sign was no quick or easy task. The SIC worked diligently and persistently over the course of several months with Taylor Plantation's property management group and the city of North Charleston to finally get the job accomplished. The SIC at EES continues to monitor pedestrian as well as vehicle safety for the school. The current SIC is exploring the option of adding a third lane to the main road entering the school. This third lane would allow vehicle traffic that is not waiting in the car rider line to have easy and direct access to the school.

The other primary goal of our SIC during the 2011-2012 year was to determine how EES could better nurture and guide students that need additional social or even academic support. The SIC quickly came to the conclusion that the best way to provide such support would be through a student mentoring program. The model used was the BUDDY (Building Up Destined and Determined Youth) program. It began in the winter of 2011/12 with roughly 8 to 10 volunteer mentors, and has grown to a current level of around 15. Our volunteer mentors are a very diverse group of individuals, including parents of children at EES, area business people, retirees, etc. Each mentor is paired with a student and is expected to meet with their mentee at least one hour per week. That hour can be spent playing games, going to the library, eating lunch or just talking. If asked, just about any mentor at EES would say that one of the most gratifying things about this service is that you are given a chance to make a real and lasting difference in a child's life. Sometimes all a child needs, or even craves, is to have someone listen to them, to give them a vote of confidence, or just a "pat on the back". EES and the SIC strongly feel that this mentoring program, led by dedicated and committed volunteers, has very clearly demonstrated that someone really does care. Eagle Nest and the SIC plan to continue to support and promote the BUDDY program in the future, and is very confident that it will continue to make a difference, even if it is just one child at a time.